1:Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Saramacca

PREFACE

101 is relatively small, and is localized in the interior of French
619 Guiana, not far from the Dutch boundary. In any consideration of the Guiana Negroes, yet a fourth group must be kept in mind—that of the Negroes of the coastal region, who remained enslaved until their emancipation in 1865.

489 The country of the Saramacca people is reached from Paramaribo, the capital and port of the colony of Suriname (Dutch Guiana), by the weekly train which goes some ninety-five miles to Kabel, where the railway meets the river. From Kabel transportation into the far interior is by dugout canoe, owned and manned by Saramacca men.

133 The country above Kabel, which the Saramacca people call the "big bush," is jungle. Over the watershed lie the Amazon basin and the forests of northern Brazil. Once in this region, the traveler has no contact with European civilization, though he is still under the protection of the Dutch Government.

121 The picture which we draw of the Saramacca people is
114 based upon two field trips to Dutch Guiana, undertaken in the summers of 1928 and 1929. During our second trip we traversed the entire stretch of the Saramacca country from below Kabel, where the Awka villages are located, to the last native habitation on the Pikien Rio, beyond which are some fields, then uninhabitated miles of wilderness to the Brazilian border.

The ethnological work conducted among the Saramacca tribe of Bush Negroes and the Negroes of the coastal region of Suriname represents a portion of an investigation into the physical and cultural characteristics of the Negroes of the New World. This research, which is still in progress, has included field work in the United States, in Dutch Guiana, and in Africa, and some comparative study in the islands of the Caribbean. It began in 1923 with an inquiry into Negro-white crossing in the United States.[1] As the work progressed it became evident that the problem

[1] For the results of this portion of the investigation, see M. J. Herskovits, "The American Negro, a Study in Racial Crossing" (1928); and "The Anthropometry of the American Negro" (1931).

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demanded more knowledge of the sources of the slaves who compose the Negro ancestry of the American Negroes than was available. This knowledge, which historical documents do not give us, was, therefore, to be sought in a comparison of Negro cultures in the New World and in Africa.

As the research was continued, moreover, it became apparent that the scientific problem of the Negro in the New World held implications of larger significance, and that the history of the Negro in the New World has constituted a vast "laboratory" experiment in the processes of racial mixture and of cultural contacts. The Negroes who were brought to the New World came of various West African stocks, and here they mingled their blood with the English, the French, the Dutch, with the Danish, Spanish, and Portuguese who became their masters, and they absorbed in varying degrees the culture of these masters. At the same time, they came in contact with aboriginal Indian peoples with whom they also mingled. But the Negro has not only absorbed; he has also given. The conclusion, still held by many students, that the Negro slave came to this country a savage child with or without his loin cloth, and as naked culturally as he was sartorially, is one which cannot today be accepted.

At the beginning of our field work in Suriname, one of us went up the Suriname River to study the Bush Negroes, and the other remained in Paramaribo to collect folk lore from the town Negroes and to ascertain what Africanisms could be discerned in their beliefs and behavior. When we met and compared notes, some striking things came to light, for bush and town Negroes were, as the evidence in hand suggested, much more closely allied culturally than had been realized, while both were seen to have many aspects of culture that clearly link them with West African and other New World Negroes.

Thus, in bush and town, the Negroes hold the same concept and offer the same explanations of the soul and

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184 emphasized that whatever the differences, much of Africa remains in the coastal region. Thus, to cite an instance, at a *winti* dance in Paramaribo one night, the drummers were grumbling about the slowness with which possession was coming on. At last the priestess, possessed by *Lebba*, the Nigerian-Dahomean god of the crossroads, began to dance. Whereupon an elderly drummer flung up his hands and cried out, "Praise God, idolatry is not dead yet!" The word he used for idolatry was Dutch, and he pronounced it in Negro-English, *afkodrai*.

● 121 The importance of the Bush Negroes for the student of Negro cultures, then, is that they live and think today as did their ancestors who established themselves in this bush, which is to say that they live and think much as did the Negroes who were brought to other parts of the New World, and who became the ancestors of the New World Negroes of the present day.

In planning this book, therefore, it has seemed more important to stress the Bush Negro's attitudes toward his own civilization, and his own logic in explaining his customs, than to give a more conventional description of an integrated village or the tribal life of a primitive people. Such attitudes, moreover, whether analyzed among Negroes in Africa, Guiana, the Caribbean, or in the United States, can be studied most advantageously when they are juxtaposed against the factor of outsiders—in this case ourselves, a man and a woman, who came as friendly whites.

114 This book, however, is not an ethnographic treatise. The scientific discussion of these data will appear in monographic form, while the correspondences between bush and town Negroes, and between these and other Negro groups found in the New World, are included in a memoir on the folk lore of the town Negroes of Paramaribo which is now in press. The situations to which we have given emphasis are those which have a direct bearing upon the beliefs and practices of Negro peoples wherever they are found today, but they are presented as they would—and did—actually

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occur among the Saramacca people. Nothing has been included either in descriptive detail, in the spoken or unspoken thoughts attributed to a Bush Negro, or in characterization, which has not been given us by our Bush Negro informants or has not been witnessed by ourselves. If the thoughts of Moana Yankuso or of any of the elders who figure in the book seem sophisticated when contrasted with the simplicity of the material life of the Bush Negroes, then it is because the stereotype of the childlike, carefree Negro has been so widely accepted. The subtlety and astuteness of a man like Moana Yankuso, or of Sedefo, our chief paddler and the right-hand man of Yankuso's strongest rival, or of Apanto, the sorcerer, cannot be too emphatically stated.

In view of the political factions on the river, and our concern lest these make capital of the fact that a village had been generous in the confidences given the whites, several villages do not appear under their own names. For Headman Moana Yankuso was an old man when we visited him, and alliances for the succession to his high office were at that time already being formed, alliances which, since his death some three years ago, have undoubtedly been consolidated and made effective for the time when his successor is to be named. Villages, therefore, are in some instances given the names of rapids in the river, and not necessarily the names of the rapids found nearest to the villages of which we are writing. In this manner we have sought to preserve the anonymity of the villages without violating the authenticity of place names. Men and women, as well, with the exception of the priestess Amasina, Moana Yankuso, his daughter Wilhelmina, the bassia of his village, Bibifo, and the Captains of Baikutu, S'ei, and Dahomey do not appear under their own names, but under other typical Saramacca Negro names.

Work of the type we have attempted cannot be accomplished without the cooperation of many persons, and we are privileged to acknowledge here our gratitude to those

2:Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
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tion as the Djukas stand and gaze at the criminals of France. And, through this study of the Djuka, the reader may know Djuka life for himself. In the pages of Dr. Kahn's book he journeys up tropical rivers to jungle villages whose names, being translated are, "Try me," "God knows," "Don't Touch Me," and the "Village of the Foot that has no Resting-Place." He meets men whose names mean "Waving Flag," "He Speaks the Truth," "Nice Fellow," "Laughs When He Talks," and "Love Is Sweet."

Dr. Kahn takes his reader far into the interior, for his starting point is where superficial travellers end. The journey leads to the tribe which has two languages: one for ordinary use, and the other a secret language which they call "deepee talkee"; and to strange villages which a man must enter carrying a paddle before him as a symbol that he is voyaging. It is a journey among peoples proud and spirited and courageous, descended from ancestors so bold in their rebellion that they were able to conclude treaties whereby the white man paid them a tribute which their descendants still receive in the form of an annual gift from the Dutch authorities to the headmen of the various Djuka tribes. The reader thus finds himself among the only primitive people in the world to whom the white man pays tribute; among a people to whom magic is as real as science is to us; who believe that spirits, both good and evil, inhabit the very streams and trees of the forest; people who know how to manufacture courage through the hypnotic intoxication of the tomtom and how to get rid of fatigue in the ecstasy of the dance; people whose

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art sense is devoted entirely to the decoration of gifts for their women, while no pains are taken in the decoration of religious objects. The Djuka reasons that "if a God is a good God, well disposed toward the black man, he does not care whether his fetishes are well executed or not"; while, "if he is a bad God, he will continue to be bad, regardless of whether much time has been spent in adorning his fetishes."

All this is picturesque; but, let me repeat that Dr. Kahn does more than give a vivid and authentic study of this twentieth century primitive; somehow in a starkly true unbiased picture, without ever pointing a moral, or presenting a personal conclusion, he contrives to make us see ouselves at the same time that we see the Djuka. And in that achievement, I think, lies the great value of his book.

BLAIR NILES

New York City
November, 1930

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PREFACE

THE year 1929 witnessed the opening of the air-mail route to Dutch Guiana, and it can be expected that before many years have passed the encroachments of industrial civilization will wipe out the last remnants of primitive West African culture in the New World. The Bush Negroes will be a vanished people, their culture gone, their habits and life forgotten. The African slave trade will then be only an historical memory.

Happily unaware of their probable extinction in a fast mechanizing world, these wild Bush Negroes still maintain in South America the ancient customs and venerable economy of the jungle dwellers of West Africa. Surinam is now an ethnological laboratory where one may study certain types of negroid jungle life in one of its purest forms. There the culture origins of the American Negro are preserved, as in a museum, by an historical accident.

In 1922, 1923 and 1925 I visited the South American tropics for the purpose of studying public health measures as applied to tropical disease. These studies took me to the border of the Bush Negro countries. Although my contacts at that time were very brief, and my knowledge of the Bush Negro altogether limited, I was determined to return and study further the lives and customs of a people who, although only

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Preface

glimpsed by me, seemed a problem worthy of being illuminated. Therefore in 1927 an expedition, under the auspices of Dr. Clark Wissler of the American Museum of Natural History, was undertaken with the financial aid of Mr. Myron I. Granger.

The short time allotted me during this expedition did not suffice for the gathering of much material on the history and culture of the Djukas; consequently in 1928 and 1930 further expeditions under the same auspices and also financed by Mr. Granger were organized. Djuka is a composite picture of these several journeys.

As to the origin of the name "Djuka" there has been no little doubt. Many claim that it is a derivation of *Ouca* which was the name of the plantation where a treaty of peace was signed between the Bush Negroes and the whites nearly two hundred years ago. Perhaps that is true, for "Djuka" formerly applied solely to Bush Negroes of the Aucaner Auca tribe and is still so used by many but through widespread usage has come to designate not only the Aucaners, but all the Bush Negroes, collectively speaking.

This work makes no attempt at being an ethnological or anthropological account in the scientific sense of the words. It is a narrative of personal observation among these Bush Negro tribes set down with such accuracy as is possible for one trained in another field of science. Its purpose is to further the understanding of these primitive people and to acknowledge their superiority in their own scene. Finally, this book has been inspired by sincere admiration of the

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manner and success of these escaped African people in the adaptation of their primitive culture to a new environment.

I wish to express my deep appreciation to Dr. Clark Wissler, Curator in Chief of Anthropology and Ethnology at the American Museum of Natural History, for his advice and co-operation. The kind assistance of His Excellency, Baron van Heemstra, ex-Governor of Dutch Guiana, and His Excellency Dr. L. Rutgers, present Governor of Dutch Guiana will always be remembered. The aid offered me by [redacted] F. van Haaren, Colonial Secretary, and James B. Lawton, American Consul to Dutch Guiana has been invaluable. Mr. Alexander Wolff of the Surinam Balata Company assisted me wherever possible in a most friendly manner, as did Mr. J. M. W. Strang of Paramaribo. Also Mr. R. M. Schmidt, missionary at the village of Gansee was very helpful.

To Mr. E. W. Rogalli I owe my profound gratitude as to a friend, guide, and adviser. With his thirty-five years of experience in the South American bush he helped me materially in gathering a considerable amount of the information which is incorporated in this book. His willing assistance greatly expedited and simplified my expeditions. I wish to express my thanks to my very good friend Dr. John C. Torrey, whose understanding and advice were of great value to me.

I am deeply indebted to the black men, particularly to Abaisa, the headman of Lombe, to Moi-Man and Bat-Jou of the Aucaners; to Ahleesie of the Boni tribe; and to old Captain Koffay of the Paramacca nation, who, among other Bush Negroes acted as informants.

/1/

Introduction

114 After having left the plantation life in the colony of Surinam,
121 I went back there in the beginning of 1851 with the plan, as the
[101] result of an agreement reached by me with a Belgian firm, to send shiploads of wood to the motherland and Belgium.

[123] I undertook my journeys to the Bush Negroes for this purpose and visited most of their dwelling places, something that entailed effort and great cost, since I distributed ample presents everywhere for the purpose of thereby acquiring their confidence, which they do not readily grant to Whites.

123 At my very first encounter I took the precaution of politely
[576] greeting each one of them without distinction and shaking their
[177] hands, a practice taken over by them from the Whites in the most recent times, which assures them of a feeling of good-will such as they experience among themselves but never from a White.

[352] I spoke to them frankly and in a friendly way, sat next to them in their huts on their low stools, and partook of their meals. In short -- I lived for a while without reserve or fear among them, paying amply for everything that I enjoyed in this way or that.

[273] I also permitted them, whenever they wanted to use any of my store of beverages, such as wine, beer, brandy, and gin, to ask me for it quietly, so that I would be able to order my servants to offer them what they had requested. In addition I supplied /2/ them amply with dram (1), herbs, and lead and, in order to show

1. A kind of inland rum (sugar spirits).

generosity to the women as well, frequently gave them and the children biscuits, cake, or some coins.

[121] In the beginning they were very reserved and mistrustful, but gradually, and after some difficult years, became more open with me, so that I, adapting myself entirely to their practices, was able to carry out my plan to have the necessary wood processed by them.

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Agriculture among the Bush Negroes of the Marowijne /Maroni/

by D. C. Geijskes (1)

1. Government biologist with the Department of Internal Affairs, Paramaribo.

1. Introduction

When one goes to the small communities of the inhabitants of the bush who live in the interior districts of Surinam, one quickly sees, upon examination, the basis on which the maintenance of such communities rests. The struggle for existence among primitive peoples covers the food supply and the resistance that can be offered against illness and pests. These two factors ultimately determine the birth surplus, which as a result expresses the possibility for survival.

Among the Bush Negroes we see in the course of the years an increase in the population, an advance, therefore, in spite of the obstructions of nature. But this advance creates new problems. It was during the Medical-Scientific Expedition to the Southern Border of Surinam, held from February to July, 1952, that, in conjunction with the medical investigation in the gathering of data about the "housekeeping" of the Bush Negroes of the Marowijne /Maroni/ and the Tapanahoni, we were struck above all by the problem of the food supply and the food itself. There is little sense in paying attention only to medical care unless at the same time attempts are made to improve the food.

An important part of the food supply is produced by agriculture. This supplies the Bush Negroes with the most, but not the best food. Next to it a number of forest products serve to provide for the need for food fats, while hunting and fishing must provide the protein.

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121 [241] The agriculture of the Bush Negroes, however, has become a matter which urgently demands the attention of the administration as a result of the wasteful use of land. Until now little attention has been paid to this, but if one wants to develop the interior of Surinam, this problem will also have to be looked into.

101 121 [103] The data provided here throw light upon the agriculture of the Paramaccaners and the Aucaners on the Marowijne and the Tapanahoni. They were gathered during the above-mentioned medical expedition and during a trip to the Tapanahoni in October, 1952. The facts thus refer primarily to the Marowijne, but in general they are certainly also valid for the other rivers along 121 64 which the Bush Negroes live. It is a typically Surinam problem, connected with the circumstance that the Bush Negroes have worked in the deep interior in the same fashion for hundreds of years, independent of the life in the civilized coastal region and almost completely outside the sphere of interest of the government.

2. The Grounds System

241 [311] For the planting of agricultural crops the Bush Negro lays out little so-called food grounds. One is to understand by this cleared pieces of ground in the virgin forest on which the crops are cultivated. The grounds lie along the rivers on higher flat lands, mostly terraces that are not submerged during high water or, in the absence of such terrain, on the slopes of hills. They are more or less circular and have a surface area of a half to one and a half hectares.

241 221 132 462 During the long dry season (October, November) the men clear the grounds. Two to three weeks thereafter the forest that has been felled is burned; the smaller branches are cleared away, but the trunks are left lying. The ground is not worked. As soon as the rains of the short rainy season begin, they start to plant and sow. This planting time falls in December and January. The wives of the Bush Negroes (for only the women do the further work) now plant all kinds of crops at the same time on one and the same ground.

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Introduction

During the expeditions of the Institut géographique national in French Guiana in 1948 and 1949, we lived in close contact with the Boni Refugee Blacks and the Oayana /Oyana/ Indians of the Upper Maroni. These populations present the remarkable peculiarity of belonging to two entirely distinct ethnic groups while living side by side, leading in general the same way of life, and having the same diet. Historical circumstances have thus joined together in the Upper Maroni the conditions of a rigorous biological experiment which, so far as we know, do not exist so distinctly in the other regions. In fact, wherever two different ethnic groups coexist, they usually do not have either the same habitat or the same way of life; for example, on the coast of Surinam the Indonesians live mostly on the rice plantations and the Blacks in the towns, under quite different conditions of habitat, diet, and hygiene; under these conditions, the differences observed on the level of pathology and demography are difficult to interpret.

Doctor André Sausse, who accompanied us, studied the Boni and the Oayana Indians on the medical level; he submitted evidence that these two populations presented a distinct pathology having profound repercussions on their demographic situation (1). During this period we lacked the time to substantiate these data by a census and by a systematic interrogation of the women. We were able to carry out this work at the close of the expedition for the delimitation of the southern frontier in January, 1957. The data collected have been verified and completed in the course of two other expeditions made for the Office de la recherche scientifique dans les territoires d'Outre-Mer /Bureau of Scientific Research in the Overseas Territories/ (October 1957 – February 1958 and

1. Dr. André Sausse, Populations primitives du Maroni /Primitive populations of the Maroni/, Larose, Paris, 1951.

B
R /509 cont./
14 October 1958 – January 1959), expeditions whose principal aim
114 was the sociological study of these populations.
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Social Structure and Way of Life

B
101 The Boni Refugee Blacks. The Boni are one of the above-mentioned
[175] tribes of the Refugee Blacks, reconstituted in the course of the eighteenth century by rebel African slaves who escaped from
3 Surinam plantations (Dutch Guiana).
[131] These tribes (Saramaka, Djuka, Paramaka, Boni) live for the
[161] most part along the rivers of the interior of Surinam. They group together a total of 25,000 persons.
B
161 With very rare exceptions, the Refugee Blacks are pure Africans.
[144] These populations, vigorous and well adapted to the country, have experienced in the course of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries a remarkable demographic increase, attested to by all the authors. Descended from small rebel groups which could not have contained more than a few hundred women, they are now estimated at more than 25,000 persons.
B
162 The Boni of the Upper Maroni, the subject of the present study,
103 number approximately 800, of whom 660 are on the French bank
[161] (the villages of Boniville, l'Enfant Perdu, Loka, Asisi, Papaïston, and Kormotibo) and 140 on the Surinam bank (the village of Kotika). These villages were established long ago.
B
Each of them groups together a matrilineage, i.e., the
613 descendants in the uterine line of one single founding ancestress;
621 certain villages know their genealogy in its entirety back to this
769 ancestress, who must have lived at the end of the eighteenth century. The members of the lineage are united by the cult of the
8 ancestors, which binds them firmly to their natal village and to
[622] their land. The social system is based essentially on this cult,
[793] the chief of the village being above all the priest of the ancestors.
B Strictly speaking, there is no marriage, but only an acknowl-
581 edged concubinage which entails neither a contract between the

B R /516 cont. The beliefs of both, attributing illnesses to
743 supernatural causes, did not predispose them to turn to European
648 doctors. Moreover, the Saint-Laurent hospital was so far away
[753] (six days paddling downstream) that a seriously ill person had plenty of time to die en route. The Boni went there only as a last resource and in general at the point of death. As for the Oayana,
B R not a single one presented himself there before 1950.

744 In 1936-1939 several circuits had been made from the post
648 of La Forestière located at the mouth of the river, but no consistent
[743] medical action had been feasible. Not until 1949 was it possible
B to create a medical center in the country itself, at Maripasoula.
R The populations were visited regularly, and the seriously ill could
[164] be hospitalized on the spot. At the same time systematic spraying with DDT inside all the huts, destroying the anthropophile anopheles, changed the environmental conditions considerably; if malaria has not disappeared, it has ceased, both among the
B Indians and among the Boni children, to be the principal cause of
R morbidity.

743 The action of the medical center has been exercised more on
744 the Boni, who live a few hours by canoe from Maripasoula, than on
648 the Oayana. Among the latter, the principal villages are two days
[484] journey by motorboat upstream amidst difficult waterfalls; the
[753] Indians are often on the move, fishing on the upper courses of the rivers or visiting their relatives on Brazilian rivers; it has happened several times that the circuits of the doctors and medical attendants (one per trimester on the average) do not find anybody in the villages; incidentally, the Oayana tend to attribute
R all internal ailments to magical causes, consulting willingly only
[844] for wounds. They willingly accept the remedies given on the spot, but rarely take the initiative of moving a sick person to Maripasoula; the women continue to have their babies delivered
R in the villages, without any hygiene.

757 Only during the last three or four years has a change in
165 attitude been noticeable among them vis-à-vis medicine; as we
B shall show below, no notable modification in their mortality has
R yet been observed as a result of this fact.

121 The principal interest of this study being to compare the
165 demographic data of two populations before they had been modified

B
Q /516 cont./
121 by the effect of medical care, we shall take 1 January 1950 as the
165 date of reference for the calculations of mortality among the Boni.

/517/

II. — Demography of the Boni

Census. — Estimation of Age.

B
125 Method used. The demographic study of the Boni presents the difficulties inherent in all populations without civil records:

1. Difficulty of determining the ages of individuals;
2. Difficulty of determining for each woman the deceased children in relation to the surviving ones.

B
125 We attempted to establish a local chronology by linking the
173 ages of individuals to events of known date that had stuck in their minds.

More particularly we fixed the ages of the old men from the voyage of the explorer Crevaux (1877) and from the death of the grand man Anato (1891), the ages of middle-aged persons from events which occurred between 1915 and 1924, death of the grand man Ochi (1915), end of World War I (1918), hydroplane accident at the mouth of the Inini (1921), installation of a rose-wood factory (1925).

B
125 The persons born after 1930 were placed without difficulty, for we knew a certain number of them as children or adolescents in 1948.

Starting with a certain number of men whose age could be
B fixed with considerable accuracy, all the others, men and women,
829] were placed by comparison. In fact, if the Boni do not know their age, they are able to say that they are, for example, two or three years younger than so-and-so (6).

B
[755] 6. Their attention is brought to bear on these age differences because, if a group isolated in the bush is led to address a prayer to the ancestors for the curing of a sick person, this prayer has to be pronounced by the oldest person.

B
R
121 /533 cont./

Thus the behavior of a human group, its fate as a people, and its very existence appear to be determined to a large extent by hereditary biological characteristics. This notion was seen clearly enough at the beginning of this century, but it has never been the object of thorough studies, the conditions for an incontestable experiment not being found together. Repudiated in the name of theoretical principles by the train of thought which has animated sociology for the past several decades, it has ended up by being completely lost from sight. Present-day sociology no longer takes into consideration the biological facts peculiar to the groups which it studies; one currently speaks of cycles of civilization, of laws of social change, of acculturation, etc., as if social facts had their own life and their own evolution, independent of the supposedly identical and interchangeable people. It is as though one claimed to study the psychism of the human being without taking his body into account, denying the influence of sex, age, sickness. Some have even managed to maintain that man is in all respects the product of the society from which he comes.

B
R
161
14
182 In the case studied here the falsity of these theories is obvious. If the Indians disappear wherever the Blacks establish flourishing societies, it is because their biological characteristics are not suited to the conditions imposed by the geographic environment, whereas those of the Blacks are to the highest degree.

Seen from this angle, the fate of the Indians of the Amazonian forest becomes clear; their social behavior and in particular their collapse upon contact with European civilization find an explanation.

B
R
[177] /534/ The relations of the Indians with the Europeans of past centuries have been equally influenced by their biological characteristics. Their inaptitude for prolonged effort came in part from their physical weakness. When the Blacks and the Indians of the Amazonian forest have been employed side by side for years as soldiers and porters, there can be no doubt on this point. The Black is a force of nature. The Indian of the great forest, often full of good will, is betrayed by his physical powers.

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INTRODUCTION

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101
[122] In the course of three missions of the Institut Géographique National in 1948, 1949, and 1952, we lived in close relationship with the tribe of the Boni, who supplied us with the bearers and boat crews indispensable for travel in the country. From the first contacts, we felt a deep interest in this worthy people, made up in the 18th century of rebel slaves escaped from the plantations of Surinam.

114
[121] Taking advantage of the rare moments of respite allowed us by our work, we tried to study the various aspects of their material, social, and religious life. The men who accompanied us were for the most part young men who had only a limited understanding of the tradition of their group: in addition, the geographic work compelling constant moves in the uninhabited forest, investigator and informants were more often than not prey to worry and fatigue.

[101]
[121] At the end of the mission to fix the French Guiana-Brazil boundary in January, 1957, we were able to undertake a systematic investigation based on a detailed inventory of the population of the villages.

114
101
[122] A fifth mission made under the aegis of the Institut Français d'Amérique Tropicale (IFAT) from October, 1957 to February, 1958 permitted us to fill part of the gaps in our work. Some complementary data were collected in October-November, 1958 on the occasion of another trip devoted mainly to the study of the Indians of the Upper Maroni.

128 The present work is exclusively devoted to the social life of the Boni. The information we assembled on their material life and their art, as well as their demographic situation, will be the subject of separate publications. /blank page/

/28 cont./

613 614 784 [621] although the supposed common ancestress doubtless goes back to the beginning of the 18th century and for three generations they have been divided among four villages situated at a week's distance by boat from one another. We can, with very few chances of error, affirm that they certainly have a common matrilineal origin and that they in fact constitute one lineage.

182 619 [361] [484] On this subject let us note that geographical separation cannot play the same role among the Refugee Blacks as in the African tribes of cultivators. The Refugee Blacks, whose habitat is linear along the banks of the river and who, being boatmen, are continually moving, cannot be completely isolated from one another.

613 614 571 /29/ Under these conditions, how can we explain the existence within certain lineages of individualized fractions subject to a separate kunu, such as Papaïston 2?

One can assume that these fractions do not really have the same origin as the principal group and that they result from a process of assimilation of a paternally related fragment.

We have cited the example of Aneta's descendants (Aw. B. 3). They are already integrated into the social life of the group; in two or three generations nobody will remember any longer their exact origin. But they will remain differentiated from the principal fraction of the Awara Bakka because they will still be subject to the kunu of their ancestress. [784]

• 121 Such are the elements we have been able to draw from a general study of kin groups among the Boni. We shall look for other data in the study of the implantation of these groups on the soil, and especially of the apportionment of lands among them; finally, we shall study family custom and especially inheritance.

A complete understanding of the kinship system and its functioning can be obtained only in the future by following the evolution of kin groups, the formation of new villages; and the designation of new headmen.

/29 cont./

121 This is what necessitates as precise an inventory as possible of the population in its present state.

61 Matrilineal kin groups among the Djuka and Saramaka Refugee Blacks.
114 Authors who have described the social structure of the Djuka and
184 Saramaka, groupings appreciably more numerous than the Boni, have also called attention to the use of the words lo and bɛɛ, but give them a completely different meaning.

194 The organization they describe can be summarized thus:
571 Before making up tribes, the rebels lived in small groups
621 near the plantations from which they had escaped; these groups of composite origin were designated by the word lo which means: troop, band; the same word is used to designate a band of animals.

[162] These rebels used to belong to all the nations of the west
[103] coast of Africa. In spots there may have been an attempt at regroupings of elements belonging to the same nation, as proven by the village names Loango, Dahomey, among the Saramaka.
[622] But the majority of these small groups were very probably of heterogeneous origin; in each of these lo, the bravest and most capable was designated as head.

[648] After the recognition of the Djuka and Saramaka by the
[169] government of Surinam and their regrouping on the great rivers of the interior, these groups kept their unity since they had a de facto organization and leaders. They were naturally designated by the name of the plantation they had come from. We say for example Dju nēnge for the former slaves of the Jews, Kōpani nēnge for the former slaves of the Compagnie des Indes Orientales /East India Company/. /30/

174 In the course of the 19th century the total number of Refugee
613 Blacks increased very rapidly under the influence of a high birth
614 rate. The lineages in the proper meaning of the term bɛɛ, mean-
621 ing the descendants of the same ancestress, took on sufficient im-
57 portance to constitute distinct social units. They grouped in
161

174 /30 cont./
613 1st. Lo = de facto grouping of rebels of any provenance,
614 which has in the long run split up into lineages but which remains
621 in the form of a common worship;
571 2nd. Lo = lineage, from the very beginning.
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Conceptions Relative to Kinship and Marriage

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[121] Ties between the individual and the ancestors. Before examining more deeply the social and family structure of the Refugee Blacks,
[184] it is indispensable to study what religious ties are implied between the individual and the ancestors. Here one is in the presence of basic beliefs which seem identical in the various tribes of Refugee Blacks of Guiana and of which their structure is the consequence.

[171] In the civilizations of Blacks Africa it is supposed that a current of life and /31/ strength circulates from the divinity to men through the medium of the ancestors. Among the Refugee Blacks it is taken for granted that in this respect each man is bound
[782] to his ancestors through the maternal line only. If he falls prey to illness, injustice, or adversity, he can call only on them in his prayer.

593 That does not mean that the tie with the father is ignored
[827] or considered as having little importance; it is taken for granted, as we shall see, that in the creation of man certain psychic elements are transmitted from father to son. But the current of strength binding the individual to the ancestors does not pass through the father. One cannot pray usefully to the soul of one's dead father.
[755] If I am sick and divination incriminates the action of my dead
[782] father's soul, I cannot address either prayer or offering directly to him; for that I shall have recourse to one of his near relatives in the maternal line.

/39 cont./

121 It seemed to us that in the present state of knowledge about the Refugee Blacks a study of limited scope but covering the totality of the population was preferable to the very intensive study of a small group; only the study of the population considered in its entirety brings out clearly its family custom, its tendencies in the matter of marriage, divorce, inheritance; it alone can lead to a precise knowledge of its demographic data so important even on the social plane.

Finally, this detailed inventory constitutes a firm base for following the evolution of the population in the future.

125 Taking a census of the Boni posed a problem much more difficult than for most populations without vital statistics. The 648 tribes of the Refugee Blacks enjoy in effect a statute of autonomous nations under protectorate and insist fiercely on this autonomy. The French administration has never been able to take a census of them any more than the administration of Surinam has for the Djuka and Saramaka, colliding with an ingenious ill will which defies all efforts.

It is not that they fear taxes (this is a notion practically unknown in Guiana, even on the coast (1), and the French

1. Practically, in the interior of the country, with the exception of traders who are subject to a license, nobody pays taxes and there are not even any lists of taxable people. The Creoles of the interior (principally from the British West Indies) are known only because of the fact that, as foreign subjects, they must make declarations of change of residence; French citizens are scarcely known at the administrative